Tiefo language

Tyefo, also spelled *Cɛfɔ, Tiéfo, Kiefo, Tyeforo*, is a small linguistic group of Burkina Faso, traditionally classified as a peripheral member of the Gur languages, that is currently of uncertain affiliation.

Tyefo	
cɛ̀fɔ́-mìì	
Native to	Burkina Faso
Ethnicity	12,000–15,000 (1995)[1]
Native speakers	(1,000 cited 1995)[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo - Atlantic–Congo - Savannas **Tyefo**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`tiq`
Glottolog	`tief1243` (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tief1243)[2]

Person	cɛ̀fɔ̂[3]
People	cɛ̀fɔ́ɔ̀
Language	cɛ̀fɔ́-mìì, cɛ̀fɔ́-mìyì

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Classification

Güldemann (2018) considers Tiefo to be of uncertain affiliation within Niger-Congo.[4]

Varieties

The two extant languages are provisionally called Tiefo-N (Tiefo of Numudara / Niafogo) and Tiefo-D (Tiefo of Daramandugu). They are mutually unintelligible. Tiefo-D is spoken in parts of the village cluster Daramandougou (Dramandougou, Daramandugu) of Comoé Province. Its phonology, morphology, some basic grammar, and lexicon were described in Kerstin Winkelmann's 1998 doctoral dissertation (in German). Tiefo-N covers the extinct variety spoken in Noumoudara (Numudara) village of Houet Province, and the closely related and nearly extinct variety of Nyafogo (Gnanfogo) village. A short Tiefo-N grammar by Heath, Ouattara, and Hantgan, based on salvage fieldwork with the last two known competent speakers from Nyafogo, was published in 2017. Winkelmann's dissertation includes limited data from both Tiefo-N varieties. Heath and Ouattara began a field project focusing on Tiefo-D in 2017.

Tiefo varieties were formerly spoken over a much wider area. They have been steadily declining ever since Tiefo military power was broken in an 1897 battle. Jula (Dioula) is now the dominant spoken language throughout southwestern Burkina Faso.

Villages

Tiefo villages:[3]

Official name	Village	Person	People	Notes
Nyafogo	ɲáɣáfɔ̀ɣ̀ⁿ	ɲáɣáfɔ̀ɣ̀ⁿ	ɲáɣáfɔ̀ɣ̀	Tiefo-N
Noumoudara	tɪ́ráʕã̀ⁿ	tɪ́ráʕã̀ⁿ	tɪ́ráʕã̀	Tiefo-N
Daramandougou	káɣà(-lě)	káɣà	káɣà	Tiefo-D
Me	mɛ̀ɛ́	màɣá	màɣá	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Maturku	mátòò ~ mátyòò	mát(y)òò	mát(y)òò	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Samogan	—	—	—	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Tien	—	—	—	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Kodala	—	—	—	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Koumandara	ʃíyɛ̀yⁿ	ʃíyɔ̀ⁿ	ʃíyɔ̀	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Dege-dege	dègèdègè	dègèdègè-ɲɔⁿ̂	-by-ó	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Derege	dɛ̀rɛ̀gbɛ̀	dɛ̀rɛ̀gbɛ̀	dɛ̀rɛ̀gbɔ̀	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Laranfiera	làɣàⁿfyɛ̀lá	làɣàⁿfyɛ̀	làɣàⁿfyɔ̀	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Musubadugu	ʃíkìyàʕà	—	—	formerly Tiefo-speaking
Sidéradougou	—	—	—	formerly Tiefo-speaking; partially Tiefo

Grammar

One notable feature of Tiefo languages is a vocalic morpheme that precedes nouns under some conditions. In Tiefo-D it is ē, and it appears chiefly in postpausal position. Tiefo-N has à, è, and ò, constituting a noun-class system with a partial semantic basis. These prenominal markers are apparently unrelated to the original Gur system of noun-class suffixes. Traces of old noun-class suffixes, now frozen to stems and no longer synchronically segmentable, have been discussed by Winkelmann and other Gur specialists.

Verb phrases in Tiefo languages consist of two (Tiefo-N) or three (Tiefo-D) forms of the verb stem, plus preverbal inflectional particles marking aspect and negation. Verbs show no further morphological variation. The two Tiefo-N verb forms are called perfective and imperfective, but their distribution among clause-level inflectional categories is more complex than this suggests. Tiefo-D verbs have at most three distinct forms called perfective, imperfective, and base, but some verbs merge imperfective and base. In both languages, the forms of a given verb are morphophonologically related to each other by some combination of vocalic mutation, tonal shift, and/or suffixation.

See also

- Tiefo word list (Wiktionary)

References

1. Tyefo (https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show_language/tiq) at *Ethnologue* (16th ed., 2009)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tiefoic" (http://glottol og.org/resource/languoid/id/tief1243). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Jeffrey Heath, Aminata Ouattara & Abbie Hantgan. 2017. Short grammar of Tiefo-N of Nyafogo (Gur, Burkina Faso) (http://hdl.handle.net/11858/00-001M-0000-002C-2F37-1). Language

Description Heritage Dictionary (online).

4. Güldemann, Tom (2018). "Historical linguistics and genealogical language classification in Africa". In Güldemann, Tom (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of Africa*. The World of Linguistics series. **11**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 58–444. doi:10.1515/9783110421668-002 (https://doi.org/10.1515%2F9783110421668-002). ISBN 978-3-11-042606-9.

- Kerstin Winkelmann. 1998. Die Sprache der Cɛfɔ von Daramandugu (Burkina Faso). Ph.D. dissertation, Frankfurt am Main.
- Berthelette, Carol; Berthelette, John. 2002. Sociolinguistic survey report for the Tiéfo language (https://www.sil.org/resources/publications/entry/9174). SIL Electronic Survey Reports 2002-006. PDF (https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/67/27/48/672748525875549483014831 32302180825127/SILESR2002_006.pdf).
- Jeffrey Heath, Aminata Ouattara & Abbie Hantgan. 2017. Short grammar of Tiefo-N of Nyafogo (Gur, Burkina Faso). Language Description Heritage Dictionary (online). http://hdl.handle.net/11858/00-001M-0000-002C-2F37-1

External links

- ELAR archive of the Tiefo language: grammar sketch, lexicon, collection of texts (http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0340)
- materials on Tiefo from ongoing project led by Heath (http://dogonlanguages.org/other#tiefo)